

ACCESSING TEMPE TOWN LAKE

As spring begins, people often flock to the water for recreation and relaxation. Lakes and river offer we urbanites a welcome change of environment. Getting there often takes time and transportation too can limit access. Fortunately, people in the Phoenix area have a nearby alternative that has much to offer.

Located just north of ASU and Mill Avenue, Tempe Town Lake sits between two inflatable dams on the dry Salt River. The lake isn't too big or too deep and you can't launch your ski boat, but it is very convenient and offers terrific accessibility.

The Beach Park is located between the old Mill Avenue Bridge and the railroad bridge. With the water as a backdrop, the park hosts frequent concerts and recreational sporting events. Guests can hop a ride on the scenic cruises that depart from the accessible pier routinely and there is plenty of space for kids and dogs to roam and play. What really makes the lake a wheeler's dream is the spacious boardwalk that follows most of the lake. The sidewalks wind about the lake and offer a perfect place to get some exercise and or perhaps catch a sunset.

The lake is home to Voyages Unbound, an adaptive sailing program designed to introduce the sport to people with disabilities. I caught up with the organizer's leader, Jack Oppenhuizen on a sunny January afternoon. The two of us spent a few hours skimming along the lake in one of the club's Martin 16 sailboats. The boat is designed with virtually all of the controls within reach of the pilot's seat and it doesn't take long to grasp the very basics of sailing.

The lake is a popular fishing hole. Stocked regularly with bass, trout, sunfish and catfish, Tempe Lake's accessible shoreline makes a great place for anglers in chairs. Each year, the Game and Fish Department hosts an annual Children's Fishing Clinic at the lake. The volunteer event is designed to introduce fishing to children with mental and physical disabilities. This year the event is on April 17th

Tempe Town Lake is a welcome addition to our sprawling metropolitan area. Stop by and enjoy the access.

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